

I attended the public hearing held in Durham, NC at the Duke University Law School. I want to express my appreciation for the hearing and the chance for the public to express their concerns. However, out of the 5 hour hearing, only 50 minutes were for public comment. I was number 29 in line to speak and never got my chance. It would be nice to have more hearings, especially on such a vital subject, as well as more time for official public comment.

I agree with all the public statements made in the hearing and I want to add the following: Deregulation opens up the danger not only of consolidation (of programming, of viewpoints, of stations), but of intruding corporate interest where radio becomes merely a means to push products or to push agendas that push products. Network television has already gone this route and I don't know that we can bring it back, but at least keep radio from following in its footsteps. Even more drastic media mergers could be problems for big business (in addition to the problems it poses to small, local businesses). Suppose Clear Channel decides to take kick backs from Pepsi to not run Coke ads? TV has set a dangerous precedent with the massive media mergers of the past decade. News programs already don't run stories that would be damaging to products or services provided by another arm of the parent company. And the current war coverage merely looks like one big ad for Lockheed and Haliburton. Please don't let this happen to radio. Prevent further media consolidation. Allow the public our last chance to have a say.